

## Youth

(from Background of the DOL Guidance for the WIA State Plan)

### **A New Vision for Serving Youth Most In Need**

The Administration is committed to bold, innovative and flexible initiatives to prepare the most at-risk and neediest youth for jobs in our changing economy. ETA, in collaboration with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, have developed a new strategic vision to more effectively and efficiently serve out-of school and those at risk of dropping out of school (Training and Employment Guidance Notice No. 3-04). Regional Youth Forums were conducted in the fall of 2004 that brought together State youth leaders to develop similar partnerships at the State level, and to begin to develop a common vision and action plan for implementing cross-agency State approaches for serving the neediest youth.

Out of school youth (and those most at risk of dropping out) are an important part of the new workforce *supply pipeline* needed by businesses to fill job vacancies in a knowledge-based economy. WIA-funded youth programs should serve as a catalyst to connect these youth with quality secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

ETA's new vision for serving youth will present challenges for how State and local WIA programs interact and link with State and local education and economic development systems. To achieve this vision, States should consider this new strategic approach and associated goals across four major areas:

- ⇒ ***Alternative Education*** - Goal: Provide leadership to ensure that youth served in alternative education programs will receive a high quality education that adheres to the State standards developed in response to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.
- ⇒ ***Demand of Business.*** - Goal: The investment of WIA youth resources will be demand-driven, assuring that youth obtain the skills needed by businesses so that they can succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.
- ⇒ ***Neediest Youth*** - Goal: Investments will be prioritized to serve youth most in need including out of school youth (and those at risk), youth in foster care, those aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, homeless youth, and migrant and seasonal farm worker youth.
- ⇒ ***Improved Performance*** - Goal: Key initiatives will be implemented to assure that funding for youth program are performance-based and that systems and programs are focused on outcomes.

ETA has developed strategic partnerships at the Federal level with the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, and the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Through the State planning process, Governors have the opportunity to promote strategic partnerships across State agencies serving youth to enhance

service delivery and more effectively leverage available resources.

ETA encourages Governors to play a key leadership role in enhancing intra-State coordination among youth serving agencies and to develop cross-agency approaches for serving youth. The WIA State planning process is a vehicle for driving a Statewide youth vision that ensures that previously marginalized youth become an important pipeline of workers that helps drive the State's economy.

\*\*\*\*\*

(from the Planning Instructions of the DOL Guidance for the WIA State Plan)

IX. E. Youth. ETA's strategic vision identifies youth most in need, such as out of school youth and those at risk, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, homeless youth, and migrant and seasonal farmworker youth as those most in need of service. State programs and services should take a comprehensive approach to serving these youth, including basic skills remediation, helping youth stay in or return to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships and enrollment in community and four-year colleges. (§112(b)(18).)

1. Describe your State's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need as described above. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Include how the State will coordinate across State agencies responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, human services, juvenile justice, and other relevant resources as part of the strategy. (§112(b)(18).)
2. Describe how coordination with Job Corps and other youth programs will occur. (§112(b)(18)(C).)
3. How does the State plan to utilize the funds reserved for Statewide activities to support the State's vision for serving youth? Examples of activities that would be appropriate investments of these funds include:
  - a. utilizing the funds to promote cross agency collaboration;
  - b. demonstration of cross-cutting models of service delivery;
  - c. development of new models of alternative education leading to employment; or
  - d. development of demand-driven models with business and industry working collaboratively with the workforce investment system and education partners to develop strategies for bringing these youth successful into the workforce pipeline with the right skills.
- a. Describe how your State will, in general, meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design. (§112(b)(18) and 129(c).)